

Viking Saga

NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL

GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

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Northwest post prom review

By Danyka Galvan

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Professional hypnotist Brent Breckner hypnotizes several students attending post prom. "It's like a dream, almost. It was super fun, and I would definitely do it again," said junior Olivia Sargent.



Photo by Emelia Richling

Retiring Teachers

Kim Coates, Dave Olson, Roberta Ruth, Ryan Rathke and Sharon Placke are all retiring. Learn more about it here!



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Student Writers

Read about which of our students might be best-selling authors in the future!



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Class of 2021

Find out where Northwest seniors plan on going after graduation!



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Vans' Art Contest

Learn more about Northwest's foot-first entry into Vans' Custom Culture Contest!



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After we danced the night away

By: Danyka Galvan



Post prom is an event that occurs after prom until three in the morning. It's an event that is normally filled with endless fun and food. Our 2021 post prom, was held in the community field house and consisted of two bouncy house activities, a photo booth, a basketball

court, a hypnotist and, at the end of the night, prizes.

When thinking of post prom, I personally pictured more activities. I expected a bigger variety of games and other shows/performances. I heard of the list of things that were wanted for our 2021 post prom a couple weeks beforehand from my mom who was a part of the post prom committee. This raised my initial expectations.

As soon as we walked in, we were welcomed by an empty field house with two bouncy house activities in the very back and a photo booth in the corner. I was a bit unimpressed at first; however, we made it work when they brought out the sports balls. There were groups playing basketball on the court, and in the empty area were a few people tossing a football back and forth. Many groups were just sitting on the ground in circles chatting. There were also a few kids racing through the bouncy house obstacle course.

I was able to attend the Doniphan High School post prom where they had several activities set up. They had a whole dodgeball tournament with teams that were assigned beforehand. They set up escape rooms and had many other tournaments going on throughout the night. Overall I feel that Doniphans post prom provided more activities than our school.

If there was one thing to be impressed by, it was definitely the food. There were endless amounts of many of our favorite fast food restaurants. Eileen's Cookies, Raising Canes, Dairy Queen, Dominos, Runza and many more. This was all food that was specifically chosen to the liking of a majority of

teenagers. My personal favorite was the Dairy Queen blizzards. There was a large selection of blizzard flavors that we were allowed to choose from. Blizzards such as, cookie dough, Snickers, M&M and many more.

About halfway through post prom we saw the chaperones set up a line of chairs in the middle of the room. We instantly knew that the hypnotist show was about to begin. He had us all do a mini hypnosis test and whoever wasn't sufficiently hypnotized would sit down. The rest were allowed to come up and sit in a chair. Students who didn't make it up to the chairs were welcome to follow along while sitting on the ground. The hypnotist talked through a few calming scenarios that relax their bodies and make the subjects unaware of their surroundings. The hypnotist then walked the hypnotized students through many activities; like riding roller coasters, growing hair on their knuckles and shouting things they wouldn't normally say.

The hypnotist act lasted almost two hours, and was the most exciting part of the night. However, I personally think that the performance could have been shortened because it took up half of our post prom. After the show we all continued to sit while waiting for our names to be called for prizes. All seniors (along with juniors if they had paid their dues) were allowed to win a prize. The only downside to the prizes was that there were few big prizes and if a student didn't get the luck of the draw to go first, they were stuck choosing between smaller gift baskets. The bigger prizes were quite interesting: two X boxes, six TVs and a few airpods. The prizes were pretty neat and an amazing privilege to receive.

Overall, post prom gave us a lot of things that I was thankful for. We received more than enough from amazing donors. I just wish there would have been more activities to keep us busy. There's not much to complain about. The people behind the planning of post prom did an amazing job. I would 100 percent recommend attending post prom!

VIKING SAGA

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VikingMedia



The retirement collection: Roberta Ruth

By Emelia Richling

Spanish instructor Roberta Ruth always knew being a teacher was part of her future plans. What she didn't expect was the journey that took her through several states, subjects and student serenades. As the 2020-2021 school year concludes, Ruth prepares for retirement but not without reminiscing on the time she has spent teaching.

In New Mexico 44 years ago, Ruth began her career as an English instructor for middle and high school students. Even then, she was also showing her appreciation for foreign languages.

"I started a foreign-language Spanish program for elementary schools in Albuquerque," Ruth said. "It was so fun and rewarding."

Yet, it wasn't until after Ruth taught in Canon City, Colorado, and moved to Nebraska that she began teaching Spanish. She had fallen in love with learning languages during high school, so after taking two years of Spanish in high school, she pursued a degree in the subject.

"I really loved learning languages," Ruth said. "Since I lived in New Mexico [growing up] and had a lot of friends who spoke Spanish, we got to use it all the time."

Once she began working at Northwest, Ruth had fully assimilated to teaching Spanish, instructing second-year students and eventually continuing on to teach third and fourth-year students.

"We added a fourth-year [class] as more students finished three years of Spanish," Ruth said, explaining how Northwest only offered a

combination class that included third and fourth-year students until the school added an official fourth-year class.

During August of 2017, Ruth experienced an entertaining moment in her life when, on her birthday, students in the fourth-year class decided to throw a party. Then senior Payton Stein serenaded Ruth with birthday songs using his guitar.

"I enjoy working with the students and am so grateful for what we have here at Northwest," Ruth said.

Across multiple states and through several subject areas, Ruth has left a lasting impression on thousands of students. Yet, even in retirement, Ruth doesn't plan to stop teaching. With goals to volunteer at the literacy council and to keep reading books during retirement, Ruth is a life-long teacher and learner who has created a collection of incredible memories.



Photo by Emily Krupicka

Roberta Ruth instructs juniors Rachel Ost-diek and Katie Weaver about conjugations.

The retirement collection: Dave Olson

By Danyka Galvan

Dave Olson, along with a few other teachers, have announced their retirement. Olson has taught for a total of 44 years. Not only has Olson had a career of teaching, he also had a few career changes along the way.

"I taught for OPS for a total of 23 years," said Olson. "One year I wanted to go into business. I worked for Elite Siding, sold windows and siding. I also managed Jiffy Lube, but I realized I didn't like business. I liked teaching better, I missed it."

With a passion for teaching, Olson recalls a funny moment from his early years, working at Bryan High School.



Photo courtesy of Danyka Galvan
Olson oversees as chem students perform the qual analysis lab.

"I mixed solid potassium and water stored in kerosene, put it in water and it exploded into flames," Olson said. "One day I was demonstrating and thought to myself, 'well if a little bit is good a lot would be better.' I put a bigger piece in and it sprayed the students with kerosene. You can imagine the phone calls parents"

In his many years of teaching, Olson has impacted students in more areas than just education.

"I teach them to be better students which overall allows you to be a better person," Olson said. "I teach students to turn frustrations into success stories. If you're not trying to get better, something's wrong."

The impact on students lasts even after highschool and throughout future years.

"Students come back and say 'Thanks for pushing me to get better and to prepare better for college,' Olson said. "Advanced chemistry students will even come back and thank me."

With retirement, Olson will have plenty of free time on his hands.

"I'll get to see my grandkids more," said Olson. "I'm getting my master's in Christian apologetics which is learning how to descend your faith and answer questions; being able to tell others why we believe what we believe."

Mr Olson has seen the development of many students through his 44 years of teaching. He has a few words of advice to all students.

"Take the classes that will push you, not the easy classes, if you get the choice, thank teachers from tough classes," Olson said. "You

Solving Rathke-isms

By Meghan Pennell

“Whackity Whack.”

Occasionally followed by “Don’t talk back,” this Rathke-ism is used when a fraction has the same term in the numerator and denominator and divides out. Sometimes he’ll say one wack and the class joins in on the second.

“Foso?”

For sure. This Rathke-ism is preceded by any arrangement of “negative, negative, positive” to determine whether a factoring problem comes out as positive or negative. Shockingly, most classes always reply but not always with the right answer.

“Two-stepper, grasshopper”

When only two steps are remaining in a math problem, Rathke uses this phrase to encourage his students to finish strong with the problem they’re working on, as there are only two remaining steps.

“Here’s the skinny.”

An idiom originating from the 1960s when the military would communicate through papers they referred to as “skinny” because of their thin texture. Most every class is began with “Here’s the skinny” as he gives a run down of the day.

“Sorry to go off on a tangent. Not that you guys care.”

Teaching math and cow impressions aren’t Rathke’s only talents, as he proves to be quite the storyteller. His favorite topics include binary code, the pyramids, baseball and any story about his family or his early years teaching. Ask him about Ruth sometime.

“You just got to get in the boat.”

Rathke often refers to having a longterm grasp on a math concept by being “in the boat.” The main goal of most Rathke math lessons is to get everyone into the boat.

The retirement collection: Kim Coates

By Gabriel Lorenzo

Northwest special education teacher Kim Coates decided to end her teaching career after 21 years helping students. With all the time spent here, Coates has enjoyed the atmosphere of Viking culture.

Starting her career, she worked part-time as a reading teacher.

“[A teacher] had to take emergency leave, so the first year I was subbing at the old Walnut and I took over,” Coates said.

Coates mainly teaches one class but also helps students excel in other subjects.

“I teach Home Essentials, which is a class that gives skills like how to take care of your household,” Coates said. “I also teach academic study hall and am usually found in science and social studies classes.”

Besides teaching, she has other school-related responsibilities.

“I’m one of the prom sponsors,” Coates said. “I’m on the RTI (Response to Intervention) team. I just stepped down from being on the PLC (Professional Learning Communities) Advisory

Board. I’ve [been involved] with musical for four years.”

After retiring, Coates plans to be with family and do other activities.

“[I want to] spend more time with my grandchildren,” Coates said. “My parents are not in the best of health, so [I want to] help my parents more [and] get my gardening done this year. My husband would like to travel to Ireland.”

Coates has many great memories working with the staff and students at NW.

“I love working in the SPED department,” Coates said. “[I also enjoyed] working with musical because it’s just so different than what I normally do. Seeing that someone understands and seeing their minds start clicking is what I enjoy.”



Kim Coates reads an English test to freshman Jayda LaDeaux.

Photo by Gabriel Lorenzo

The retirement collection: Sharon Placke

By Molly Day

How long have you worked at Northwest?

"I have been employed at Northwest Public Schools for 29 years."

What is your position?

"Business Manager"

What are your plans after retirement?

"Spend time with my family, volunteer in the community and continue to work part-time in the area of accounting."

Are you going to miss working at Northwest?

"I will miss the staff and students at Northwest. I enjoy working in education."

What is your favorite part of your job?

"The two main parts of my position are finance and human resource. I enjoy human resources as I get to know and work with all of the staff members in the district. My favorite part is probably the accounting duties. I manage the district's budget and all financial reporting. Together with the Board of Education and the administrative team, we work to maximize the district's funding to provide the best education for the students in our schools."



Textbooks to storybooks

By Reagan Kropatsch

Many people at Northwest might be surprised to find out that at least five students are writing their own books. These books range in topic, and a majority of the writers plan to get their story published and use the passion they have for writing in the future.

"I love writing," said senior Jayci Wilson. "I could spend hours writing and not even notice."

Wilson is currently working on a book about the struggles of growing up as a queer woman in a homophobic town.

"I take a lot of inspiration from everyday life and modern situations," Wilson said.

Writing a novel at such a young age can be a difficult task, especially when trying to balance it with school activities, homework and other life events.

"I've been working on [my book] since freshman year," said sophomore Melisa Kikic. "My goal is to be finished before the end of high school."

Kikic's book is a fantasy novel following the lives of three characters. One of them is learning to be a palm reader, one is a warrior and the last is a miner's son.

Other student writers include juniors Lennon Pfenning and Tyler Carlin, along with sophomore Lydia Vlcek. Pfenning's book is about how life continues throughout different places, following different people. Carlin's book is about a group of teenagers with special powers and their journey to defeat an old demon. Vlcek's

book is about a boy in the future who doesn't fit into society and is considered dangerous. The boy struggles for freedom along with all of his sidekicks.

Many of the student novelists are writing works of fiction, including dystopian novels and real-life stories that some people could relate to. All of the students hope to someday get published.

"I would love for [my book] to be published," Wilson said. "Right now it's posted on Quotev."



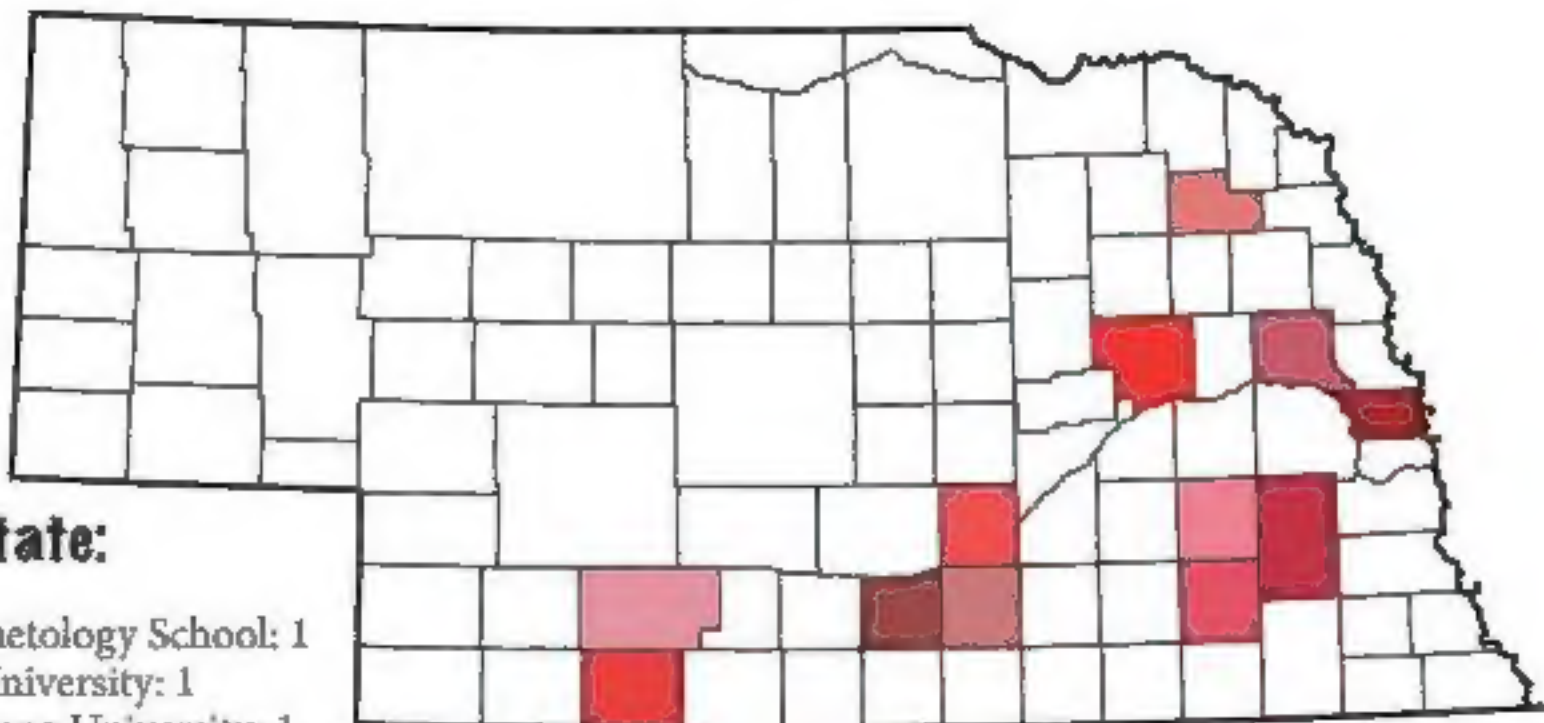
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"Oh, the Places You'll Go!"

By Emily Krupicka



Out of State:

Aveda Cosmetology School: 1
 Briar Cliff University: 1
 Brigham Young University: 1
 Colorado State: 1
 Fort Hays State University: 1
 Grand Canyon University: 2
 Highland Community College: 1
 Kansas University: 1
 Los Angeles College of Music: 2
 Mitchell Technical College: 1
 Morningside College: 1
 Online Animation School: 1
 Pikes Peak Community College: 1
 Rio Salado College: 1
 Santiago Canyon College: 1
 Santa Monica College: 1
 University of South Dakota: 2
 University of Wyoming: 3
 Walla Walla University: 1
 Wyoming Tech: 1



In State:

Bryan College of Health Sciences: 3
 Columbus Central Community College: 2
 Concordia University: 1
 Creighton University: 1
 Doane University: 2
 Grand Island Central Community College: 12
 Hastings Central Community College: 2
 Hastings College: 5
 McCook Community College: 1
 Metropolitan Community College: 1
 Midland University: 1
 Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture: 1
 Nebraska Wesleyan University: 3
 Northeast Community College: 4
 Southeast Community College: 4
 Union College: 1
 University of Nebraska-Kearney: 21
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln: 34
 University of Nebraska-Omaha: 6
 Wayne State: 9

Other:

Gap Year: 2
 Military / Army: 5
 Workforce: 15
 Tradeschool: 1
 Undecided: 32
 18-21 Program: 1

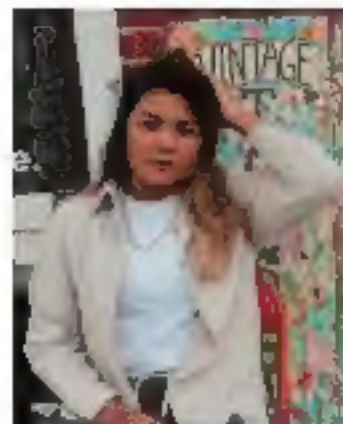


Photo Courtesy of
Grace Baue

Eunique Zapata

Los Angeles College of Music

"I'm looking forward to all the amazing opportunities and life changes headed my way in college."



Photo Courtesy of
Ellis Collins

Juan Zapata

Nebraska Wesleyan University

"I'm just very happy to begin my journey at NWU, as the atmosphere reflects that of Northwest. I look forward to the many opportunities that are to come in the future."



Photo Courtesy of
Celeste Chihuahua-Lazalde

Melissa Chihuahua-Lazalde

Bryan College of Health Sciences

"I'm excited to simply start a new chapter of my life and embark on a new adventure. I'm excited to study what I love!"



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An off-the-walls contest for the sake of art

By Lydia Vlcek

The iconic Vans brand shoes always seem to find a way to remain relevant over the many years they have been in business. Its simplistic design is always changing, from basic tennis shoes to checkered slip-ons.

Many people on different social media platforms have seen the simple white Vans as a canvas to project their creativity onto, and this hasn't gone unnoticed by the company. As of 2010, Vans decided to host a contest revolving around the creativity of high school students and the overall benefit of school art programs through painted shoes.

Art teacher Beau Studley oversaw the contest when Northwest's application was accepted and got the chance to participate against 250 other schools in Van's "custome culture contest".

"We've done this about four years," Studley said. "In the past, we've had issues on who takes [the shoes] home, so now I only have a few students work on the shoes."

This year, four seniors are working on shoes that could win the contest. All of the students involved get to work on one pair, which made time management crucial to finishing before the deadline of April 16. If any students whose shoes have been entered win the contest, they can receive a large sum of money for their art program. This ranges from \$15,000 for the runner-ups and \$50,000 for the winners.

Krista Price is one participant selected by Studley to work on

the shoes. She chose the theme "hometown pride" for her pair of Vans. Yesenia Luevano also decided on this theme, and they both wanted to represent Grand Island to the best of their abilities.

"[It's] hard to do since there aren't many iconic things about Grand Island," Price said. "But I'm making it work."

"At first, it was hard to come up with ideas," Luevano said. "But I just thought of our main attractions, like the Grand Theatre and the pumpkin patch. The hardest part is getting [paint] in the curves [of the shoes]."

Ashley Carlson, Eunique Zapata and Desiree Smith decided on the theme "head in the clouds".

"I thought it would be easier to take a literal aspect," Carlson said. "So like literally having the girl's head in the clouds."

Smith had a different approach to this theme.

"I kind of took it a step further and focused on the whole day-dreaming aspect," Smith said. "It takes patience, time and a steady hand."

The top five and official winners of the contest will be announced on May 17-21. With those dates in mind, Studley is hopeful for a good outcome.

"I think this is our best chance of winning," said Studley.



Krista Price's shoes



Desiree Smith's shoes



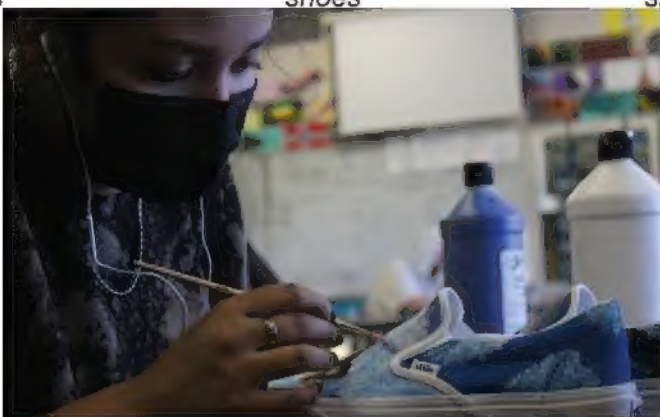
Eunique Zapata's shoes



Ashley Carlson's shoes



Yesenia Luevano's shoes



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By Lydia Vlcek



CHRIS BRUNS

What is your favorite high school memory?

"Making the soccer team my freshman year."

Did you develop senioritis? What keeps you motivated?

"Just passing."

"What is the hardest part of being a senior?"

Making sure you're passing all your classes, especially the ones you need to graduate."

What is your best advice for underclassmen?

"Never give up."

Photo Courtesy of Tracey Hamilton



NICOLE HALSEY

What is your favorite high school memory?

"Probably going to state for softball my senior year."

Did you develop senioritis? What keeps you motivated?

"Yeah probably senioritis a little bit...knowing that if I don't pass English I don't get to graduate."

What is the hardest part of being a senior?

"Knowing that everything I do is my last time."

What is your best advice for underclassmen?

"Not to take anything for granted."

Photo Courtesy of Anna Mantini



KEVIN CHEN

What is your favorite high school memory?

"The fundraiser that Northwest held for me during my freshman year. It meant a lot to me."

Did you develop senioritis? What keeps you motivated?

"Kind of...my family and friends pushing me and the thought of graduation and moving onto college."

What is the hardest part of being a senior?

"Knowing it's your last year, and things will change from here on out."

What is your best advice for underclassmen?

"Get things done and make the most out of your high school years and enjoy it the best you can."

Photo Courtesy of Sapphire Hills Photography

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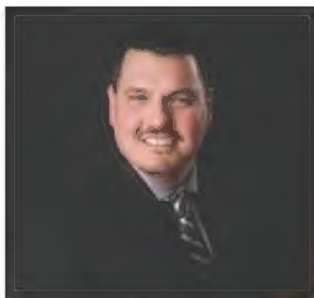
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